

The OCBI Tipping Point

“The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire.”

Malcolm Gladwell



Volume II

August 3, 2007

Welcome to our new weekly e-Newsletter called “The OCBI Tipping Point.” We hope that you find it very informative as we explore all possibilities to keep our constituency and the general public informed about all matters that affect Black folk in the state of Iowa.



Thursday morning of last week (July 26) we had a press conference announcing the Ongoing Covenant with Black Iowa (OCBI) Statewide rollout. It was a festive time, as we all appreciated the fact that for the first time since the inception of the Division on the Status of African Americans, we are now finally able to match “message with resources” to do the important work that is ahead of us.

So we are excited to seize this opportunity in history to roll out the OCBI Initiative and engage all citizens in general, but Black citizens in particular, to participate in a dialogue that has profound implications for the state.

We had a wonderful cross-section of Black leadership present, and even though it was not planned (for instance, we did not call individuals ahead of time and suggest that they wear pastel colors as opposed to dark colors [smile]), we had nice color tone and balance!

I was very appreciative to see my colleague and friend Dr. Paul Stageberg, who works in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division, at the press conference. We work on two Governor Task Forces together: the Task Force on Race and Detention, and the Task Force on the Overrepresentation of Blacks in the Criminal



Justice system. His support was very encouraging to me, and I look forward to strengthening our relationship over the days ahead.

Also present was Brando Guerrero, Community Outreach Specialist for Nationwide Allied Insurance. Brando was first introduced to me by Ms. Robin Jenkins who is now working as a State Recruiter for the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Brando was instrumental in Nationwide becoming our sole sponsor for our First Annual OCBI Summit in October 2006.

It was a great day for our Division/Commission. We are on tiptoes of anticipation and eagerly wait to see what our efforts will produce next!

DID YOU KNOW?

The OCBI does have a Healthcare Taskforce. We are concerned about improving healthcare and healthcare access in Black Iowa. Did you know the following statistics?

Approximately 16 African Americans are diagnosed with HIV each year in Iowa, and another 5 to 8 African-born persons are diagnosed each year as residents of Iowa

- Blacks account for 15% of all persons living with HIV/AIDS despite making up only 2% of Iowa's population
- African-born persons make up another 5% of persons living with HIV/AIDS, bringing the total for all Black, non-Hispanic persons to 20% of persons living with HIV/AIDS. This is 10 times what would be expected from the size of the Black, non-Hispanic population in Iowa.
- Black males are the most severely impacted group in the state. In 2005, there were 162 Black males living with HIV/AIDS, giving a rate of 473 persons per 100,000 population. Black females are the second most impacted group in the state, with a rate of 328 diagnosed females per 100,000 population.

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health, HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis Program, HARS database.

Abraham L. Funchess, Jr.

Division Administrator

Iowa Commission on the
Status of African-
Americans

515-281-3855

Abraham.funchess@iowa.gov

The Ongoing Covenant with Black Iowa: The Foundational Phase of the Culver-Judge
"One Iowa, One Unlimited Future" Initiative